

**Program Begins to Reduce Speed Limit near San Jose Public Schools** By Stephen Baxter, Mercury News, August 12, 2010

A two-year pilot program to reduce the speed limit near Lincoln High, Hoover Middle and Trace Elementary schools begins in the coming week, and it could be expanded to other schools in the city. Before San Jose Unified schools start classes on Aug. 16, the 25 mph speed limit sign on Dana Avenue is expected to be replaced by a 15 mph sign to slow drivers near the three schools. **Councilman Pierluigi Oliverio**, who represents the Willow Glen and Rose Garden areas, initiated the change.

A state law adopted in 2008 allows cities to reduce speed limits of two-lane streets that are adjacent to schools. However, the intersection must have a traffic study finished before the speed limit can be reduced—and studies have not been conducted near many San Jose schools.

"I personally think it should be a citywide policy, but we don't have the funds to do the traffic studies," Oliverio said. "I think it's a great opportunity to enable a pilot and to maybe eventually make this a citywide thing."

Many parents from the three schools near Dana Avenue praised the decision, including Mona Payne, a grandmother of two students at Trace Elementary. Last school year, Payne helped her grandchildren's classes cross Dana several times to get to the Hoover Middle School fields. Although drivers slowed down, she said lowering the speed limit on the Dana straightaway would help.

"That was the best thing, outside of closing the street. It brought tears to my eyes," Payne said.

The speed limit will change on Dana from Naglee Avenue roughly to Hester Avenue, in front of Lincoln High.

It is unclear how many city traffic studies have been done near San Jose Unified's 55 schools. City transportation officials did not return a call for comment.

Randi Kinman, a leader of the Burbank/Del Monte Neighborhood Action Coalition, said she would like to see the program expanded to schools in her area. Sherman Oaks Community Charter School on Fruitdale Avenue had at least one pedestrian collision in front of it, she said.

"Seems to me that if we're going to run a 'pilot' project, we need to have more than one school involved," Kinman wrote in a message to her coalition members.

The San Jose City Council Rules Committee recently approved the sign change.

Police are expected to enforce the new limit in spurts in the fall, winter and spring. Beyond that, police typically patrol intersections for speeding at intersections that receive the most complaints.

In another nod to safety, city transportation workers plan to repaint the crosswalk on Brooklyn Avenue at Dana Avenue--which is main link between the Trace and Lincoln campuses. A full-time crossing guard is also expected on Dana Avenue, school district officials said.

Sixteen classrooms at Trace Elementary caught fire on July 5.

This school year Trace students will walk to Lincoln for special assemblies and other events, but they hope they won't have to use fields at Lincoln or Hoover. Trace's grass field will be OK if rains are not heavy this winter, school leaders said.